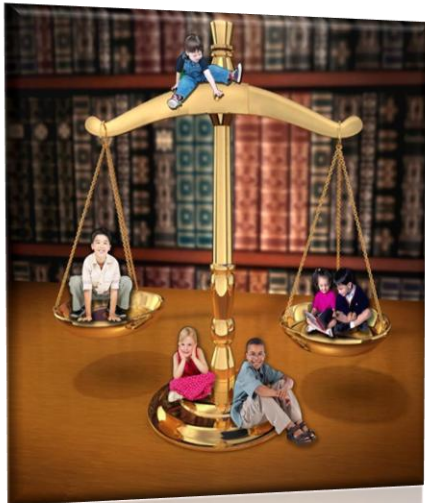
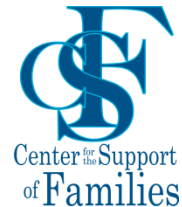


New Approaches: What Early Intervention Means for Courts

Amy Gober
Center for the Support of Families



What is Early Intervention?

Early Intervention consists of taking proactive steps to ensure:

- orders are established quickly
- both parties are knowledgeable about:
 - the process,
 - the order's terms, and
 - the consequences of nonpayment
- orders are monitored and promptly enforced

Pre-order Early Intervention

Pre-order early intervention steps may include:

- educating parents:
 - about the child support process and
 - benefits to be gained from stipulations
- expediting steps:
 - from pleadings filing
 - to summons issuance
 - to service of process
- seeking a voluntary agreements
- avoiding court, when possible
- expediting the signing of the order, its filing, and its entry in the child support system

Post-order Early Intervention

Post-order early intervention steps may include:

- ensuring a payment is made as soon as the order is effective
- monitoring compliance of the order
 - through automation or
 - staff-generated contact
- working to eliminate potential or existing payment barriers
- providing information to and answering questions of parents
- taking steps to avoid large arrearage build-ups:
 - through prompt adjustments
 - debt compromise or forgiveness
 - job assistance

Early Intervention- Court's Role

Courts can participate in early intervention by:

- approving the process and forms
- accepting signed pleadings/documents as appropriate
- approving settlement terms
- expediting the document flow at the court house
- referring eligible parties for services when appropriate

Options for Early Intervention

- Offering extensive support to CP and NCP
 - Additional program information
 - Genetic testing
 - Mediation
 - Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Identifying barriers and providing assistance genetic testing
- Three Es
 - Explaining the process to fathers
 - Educating them on the importance of participation
 - Encouraging future participation

General Conclusions

- Informing and working with the NCP early in the process leads to more stipulated orders and a higher compliance rate
- Focusing on quickly moving documents/data through the clerk and court offices results in quicker first payments
- Addressing tangential issues either directly or through referrals leads to better cooperation and compliance
- Improving process serving efforts and information provision at the time of service speed order establishment and lead to fewer defaults